



# THE SENATE SPOTLIGHT

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Georgia State Senate

March 2006

## Senate elects new Secretary

*Ewing enjoys first month as Secretary of the Senate*



The state Senate elected Bob Ewing as Secretary of the Senate last month. Ewing, who succeeds Frank Eldridge, Jr., most recently served as Assistant Secretary of the Senate.

“It is a bittersweet task to stand before you to make this nomination today,” Senate President Pro Tempore Eric Johnson of the 1<sup>st</sup> said as he nominated Ewing for the position, which is elected every two years by the full Senate. “As assistant secretary, Bob helped make all of our lives a bit easier – advising us on parliamentary matters and overseeing the flow of legislation between both houses of the legislature.”

“His knowledge and commitment to the Senate’s rules and traditions are unparalleled and his dedication to the Senate is unmatched.”

A true success story, Ewing began his career at the State Capitol as an intern for the Secretary of the Senate’s Office, and has worked his entire 27-year career for the Georgia Senate. He has served under Governors George Busbee, Joe Frank Harris, Zell Miller, Roy Barnes and Sonny Perdue. Over the years, Bob has garnered the respect and admiration of legislators and staff, making him an obvious choice for the Secretary’s office. He attributes much of his success to the mentoring of former Secretaries of the Senate Frank Eldridge, Jr. and Hamilton McWhorter.

A native of New England, he earned his political science degree in 1976 from Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster, Pa. He is responsible for modernizing the production of the Senate Daily Journal on the computer, and developing the layout and design of the Senate voting system.

*“I am honored and humbled by your faith in me...”*

*Secretary of the Senate Robert Ewing*

Bob is an avid outdoorsman and dedicated father. He serves as Chairman of the Planning and Zoning Board for the City of Avondale Estates. He also greatly enjoys spending quality time with his children. His son Ben, who attends Pace Academy was in the Senate Chamber when Ewing was sworn in as the new Secretary of the Senate. His daughter Jess attends Auburn University.

Other recent appointments in the Secretary’s office include Jeffrey Foley as Deputy Secretary of the Senate and Debbie Sorrells as Assistant Deputy Secretary of the Senate.

# *Spotlight on...the Georgia Senate in action*

## *General Assembly reaches "Crossover Day"*



The 2006 session is now well past the halfway point and rapidly headed towards another Sine Die. In just over 30 legislative days, the Senate has considered legislation on voter identification, education, child support, emerging technologies, transportation, paper voting records, women's health issues and more. Thus far, it has been quite a productive session, and it has at times been the scene of some rather heated debate. One hot topic came up early in 2006, as the Senate debated voter ID laws...

"Our civil rights dictate that we have a right to vote without undue encumbrances. But our civil rights also dictate that we have a right to have our vote count, and not be disqualified by someone else who votes illegally," said Senator Cecil Staton on Day 7, as the Senate considered SB 84.

In response, Sen. Kasim Reed stated, "Failure to present a photo ID is not grounds for denying the right to vote." Sen. Reed's argument echoed the sentiments of the Senate Democrats. After a lengthy debate, SB 84 passed by a vote of 32 to 22.

A more recent push-button issue to come up was the "Castle Doctrine"...

"The right to protect yourself, your children or your spouse should be guaranteed, no matter where you are," said Sen. Greg Goggans on Day 27, as the Senate took up SB 396, which is a bill that provides protection from criminal prosecution and civil litigation for those who defend themselves from criminal attack. The bill also removes the "duty to retreat" if you are attacked in any place you have a right to be.

In another healthy debate, Sen. Regina Thomas took the well to speak against the legislation.



"This is a recipe for murder," stated Sen. Thomas of the 2<sup>nd</sup>. "We are trying so hard to reduce crime, and to just arbitrarily say that you can meet force with force makes me afraid for my own life. I cannot understand the reasons for this bill."

SB 396 passed by a vote of 40 to 13.

Along with these two bills, the Senate has passed legislation that would ask schools to spend 65 percent of their funds on classroom expenditures only; authorize the State Board of Education to develop a curriculum for an elective course in the study of the Bible; provide for a pilot program to test the feasibility of a permanent paper record of votes in all elections; address illegal immigration issues and encourage 150 minutes per week of physical education in elementary schools. Many of these measures now wait for consideration by the House.

## *Employee Spotlight on... Daphne Elam*



### **What is your current job and/or assignments?**

I am the legislative assistant for Sen. Vincent Fort, and I have worked for the General Assembly since 2002. My main responsibilities vary from day to day, as one would imagine. My duties include answering phones, coordinating the Senator's appointments and speaking engagements, attending meetings and sometimes sitting in on the Senate sessions. I also spend a lot of time speaking with Sen. Fort's constituents, and I constantly communicate with them via e-mail, phone and fax.

### **How did you end up at the General Assembly?**

Like many folks who work up here, I started out as an intern in the Secretary of the Senate's office. I worked the '02 session under the late Secretary Frank Eldridge. Former state Sen. Donzella James hired me as her administrative assistant because of what she called my "diligence and strong work ethic." Sen. James lost her bid for a seat in the U.S. Congress, so Sen. Fort picked me out of the secretarial pool to work in his office.

### **Tell me a little about your background. Birthplace, brothers and sisters, etc.**

I was born and raised in Atlanta, and I am an only child. I was raised by a single mother, and I have a strong Christian background. My grandmother is a minister at a non-denominational church in Atlanta, and my mother serves as one of our church's psalmists. I graduated from Georgia Southern University in 2001 with a B.S. degree in political science. This June, I will complete my Master's program and receive a Master's degree in public administration from the Atlanta campus of Central Michigan University.

### **Tell us some of your fondest memories of working with the General Assembly.**

One of my fondest memories was attending Senator Fort's public hearing on the condition of Alto State Prison. Sen. Fort's passion for aiding and consulting his constituents is beyond reproach. I have also really enjoyed getting to know Sen. Regina Thomas. She is a passionate, graceful lawmaker, who always shows her poise even when she is under pressure. Another fond memory I have is working with Secretary Frank Eldridge. He was such a soft-spoken person, but he was always direct. He would compliment me on everything, from my style to my work ethic to my personality.

### **Tell us about your hobbies and/or what you enjoy doing away from work...**

I really enjoy traveling. In the last few years, I've been to the Bahamas, Jamaica and the Cayman Islands. I also love visiting U.S. cities, like New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Philadelphia and Dayton. I also love to listen to gospel, and I also enjoy all types of African-American art.

### **The General Assembly can be an exciting place to work. What are some of the aspects of your position that you enjoy the most?**

One of the best parts of my job is helping constituents. In the past, I've helped people who were in bad situations with predatory lenders and people who were in jeopardy of losing their homes. Every day is unpredictable, and I never know when a constituent will call that has a serious, real-life problem. The feeling I get when I help these people is so rewarding for me.

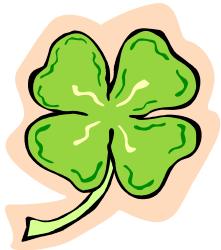
## *Senate Budget's Spotlight on...Monthly Numbers*



The revenue collected by the Department of Revenue for February 2006 (FY 06) was \$886,113,000. This is an increase of 14.8 percent when compared to the revenue collected in February 2005 (FY 05), which was \$771,545,000.

The percentage increase year-to-date for Financial Year 2006 (FY06) is 9.9 percent when compared to Financial Year 2005 (FY05).

## *Senate Spotlight on . . . March Birthdays*



**HAPPY BIRTHDAY** to . . .



**Senator John Bulloch**  
**Senator Steve Henson**  
**Senator J.B. Powell**  
**Senator Mitch Seabaugh**  
**Senator Jim Whitehead, Sr.**  
**Kevin Fillion**- Director, Budget Office  
**Cheryl Germany**- Senate Secretary  
**Callie Michael**- Budget Office  
**Denese Sampson**- Senate Secretary  
**Kristina Graves**- Senate Information  
**Angela Touhy**- Senate Secretary  
**Freida Ellis**- Secretary of the Senate's Office  
**Joseph Scheuer**- Legislative Counsel  
**Sharon Ceniglio**- Legislative Counsel

*March 19<sup>th</sup>*  
*March 30<sup>th</sup>*  
*March 12<sup>th</sup>*  
*March 18<sup>th</sup>*  
*March 29<sup>th</sup>*  
*March 9<sup>th</sup>*  
*March 10<sup>th</sup>*  
*March 5<sup>th</sup>*  
*March 15<sup>th</sup>*  
*March 31<sup>st</sup>*  
*March 28<sup>th</sup>*  
*March 10<sup>th</sup>*  
*March 14<sup>th</sup>*  
*March 18<sup>th</sup>*



## *Happy St. Patrick's Day!*

Senate Information would like to wish all Senators and Senate staff a Happy St. Patrick's Day! We hope you'll enjoy March 17<sup>th</sup> in a fun, safe and responsible way.

*The Senate Spotlight is a product of the Senate Information Office. If you have a suggestion, a person you would like to nominate for the Employee Spotlight or would like to contribute a Senate-related article, please contact us at 404.656.0028.*